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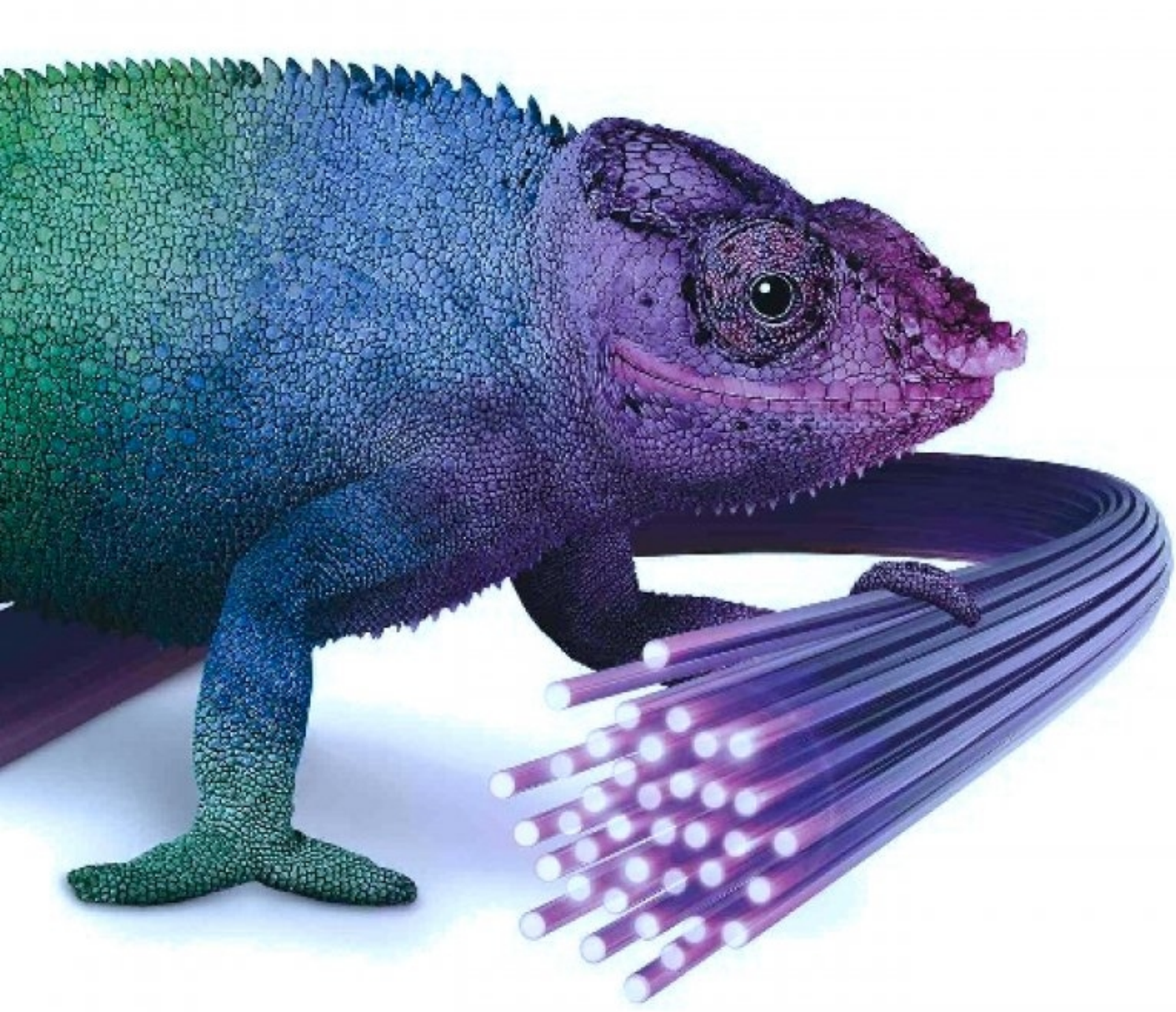

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Vancouver metro

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016

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FORT MCMURRAY
THE POLITICS OF A CRISIS
metroVIEWS

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven ...

Metro reports from inside a national catastrophe, page 3

A helicopter battles the wildfire on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SPECIAL REPORT FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRE — 5 pages of COVERAGE

EVACUATION ■ EMERGENCY ■ HEARTACHE ■ TRUDEAU PLEDGES 'TOTAL SUPPORT'

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metro NEWS

TIMELINE

MAY 1, 6:27 PM: POLICE WARN OF FIRES BURNING TO NORTH AND SOUTH OF CITY

SPECIAL REPORT FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRES — **Follow the events**

Facing fire

Tim Querengesser
IN FORT MCMURRAY

Fort McMurray resident Crystal Maltais buckles in her daughter, Mckennah Stapley, after evacuating their home Tuesday.
COURTESY TOPHER SEGUIN

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven.

The next thing is the smell — solvents, charcoal, ash — punctuated by the sound of sirens and desperate calls, seemingly everywhere along the highway, for diesel — "you got any diesel?"

Those calls were part of the overriding feeling of helplessness Wednesday evening, here on the southern edge of Fort McMurray, as dozens of people who wanted to help were forced to hold station by police as the fire yet again crossed Highway 63, the only road into town.

"Black smoke usually means a house or a car is on fire," said Jeff Parker, sitting in frustrated limbo in the cab of his truck as 50,000 litres of diesel — intended for firefighters battling the blaze — sat uselessly behind him. "And I see a lot of black smoke."

Parker has been trucking up to Fort McMurray since 2009 and has dozens of friends who live there, many of whom have been displaced.

"It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows," he said. "Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday."

Just a few kilometres north, the fire that people who fight them have called "nasty" — one that has pushed more than 88,000 people to flee north and south of a remote city surrounded by boreal forest — continued inflicting pain.

By Wednesday evening its flames had swollen to 10,000 hectares, from 7,500, and officials worried the class 4 fire might potentially spread to the city's airport. More than 250 firefighters, many who came at a moment's notice to help, were battling to save a city that's small in population but central to the economic health of Alberta.

> **"It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows. Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday."**
> Jeff Parker

That fight was already lost in many areas: More than 1,600 homes and business have been destroyed, and with the trifecta of 30C temperatures, low humidity and strong winds — along with worries about lightning storms — officials feared the fire was not done destroying.

On Wednesday afternoon, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley declared a state of emergency, the Canadian military began mobilizing to help and the fire claimed its first fatality — in a car accident near Lac La Biche, as thousands continued to flee south.

Approaching the city from Edmonton, kilometre-long convoys of pickups trucks, evacuation buses and SUVs, many coated in beige ash, turned roads in northern Alberta into a human river.

Abandoned vehicles — including one city bus — were left scattered along Highway 63's shoulders, an apocalyptic vibe counteracted by dozens of good Samaritans, who set up spontaneous gas stations and restaurants Wednesday right on the asphalt, offering gasoline out of jerry cans, water or food out of the back of their pickup trucks.

"It's going to be a long-term recovery," said Scott Long, executive director of provincial operations at Alberta Emergency Management Agency, in a daily briefing on the fire. "The damages are surprising. It will take years (to recover), for sure."

From Parker's cab, watching clouds of smoke billow through the windshield, that was a sentiment shared.

"To bounce back from this, it's doable, but it's not going to be overnight," he said.

Tim Querengesser is the managing editor of Metro Edmonton. He has written about Fort McMurray for various publications and has covered western and northern Canada since 2008.

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 1 - 9:57 PM Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signs a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.

MAY 2 – 6:05 AM Residents are warned of poor air quality and low visibility in much of Wood Buffalo.

MAY 2 - 11:00 AM **550** Officials say **the fire is between 550 and 750 hectares** in size but not yet threatening homes.

A family takes refuge in the back of their boat after evacuation at a rest stop near Fort McMurray, Alta. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nine newborn babies taken to safety in hospital drama

EMERGENCY

Official 'grateful and proud' after successful move

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

During the height of the fire consuming Fort McMurray, Alberta Health Services staff had to evacuate more than 100 patients from the city's hospital to escape, including nine newborn babies.

Dr. Verna Yiu AHS' Interim CEO confirmed early Wednesday morning that they had successfully moved all of the patients out of the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre to Edmonton.

"We had nine babies that were in the neonatal unit that actually had their mother with them and had to be evacuated," she said.

Yiu said AHS worked with WestJet to dispatch a plane to an oilsands site where most of the patients were initially evacuated to and brought all of them to Edmonton.

She said it was an incredible effort.

"I have to say that I am really, really grateful and proud of our staff," she said.

She said moving that many patients, who are now scattered around Edmonton hospitals, took an enormous amount of co-ordination and work, all while many employees were losing their own homes.

"Those employees and staff also had their own families to worry about," she said.

She said all of the patients including the newborns were healthy. She said while empty, the hospital was still standing.

COMPASSION

Crisis means displaced animals

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Many animals in Fort McMurray have been displaced or left behind as wildfires continued to burn at "explosive" levels Wednesday.

Deanna Thompson, executive director of the Alberta Animal Rescue Society, said some will be flown to Calgary.

At a news conference Wednesday morning, Fort McMurray Fire Chief Darby Allen said 48 animals saved from homes are at the McDonald Reception Centre. But other animals have not been so lucky.

RJ Bailot, executive director with the Alberta Spay Neuter Task Force, said rescue groups have been barred from entering the city to rescue animals trapped in homes.

"It's awful," he said. "We have dogs and cats in homes that are desperate. There's nothing we can do."

Bailot said a Facebook page, Fort McMurray Fire Emergency Animal Assistance, has been created to let owners know which camps and hotels are accepting animals.

Cuddles is believed trapped in an apartment. CONTRIBUTED

SURVIVAL

Escaping fire and smoke on horseback

Liz Brown
Metro | Canada

As the wind changed and wildfires pushed toward the north side of Fort McMurray, 16-year-old Jada Polem saddled up her horse and started riding through the bumper-to-bumper traffic on Confederation Way.

On Monday, her family had moved their three horses from Clearwater Horse Club on the city's south side to a northside campground they thought would be safe. But Tuesday, winds shifted and in hours they were moving their horses again.

"We were waiting for trailers to come back to pick up my horse, but it became impossible for them to get through," says Polem.

As the smoke worsened, Polem's father drove the truck and trailer that could only hold two horses while his daughter rode the third alongside. It was a terrifying prospect, as horses can be nervous in traffic, but Polem saw no other choice.

"She was a little nervous," Polem says of her Quarter Horse mare Mya. "But she handled it really well. I'm pretty sure she knew what was going on. Drivers were smiling and saying things to me like, 'That's a good mode of transportation,'" she adds.

It took four hours for Polem to ride 15 kilometres to safety — to the water treatment plant where her father worked. There she regrouped with her family and other horse owners, who were able to find a trailer spot for Mya.

Now the whole family — horses included — is safe. They're camping in their trailer in Boyle, 350 kilometres south of Fort McMurray. But Polem isn't sure about the status of their home. If there is extensive damage to their home, the family may stay in Boyle for the summer as they rebuild.

Karley Kenny, also a member of the Clearwater Horse Club, escapes on her horse while ponying two others. JULIE LODGE

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

All of Fort McMurray is placed under a mandatory evacuation order, including MacDonald Island.

MAY 3 – 6:20 PM

Motorists stranded on Highway 63 are asked to stay put as police patrol the area with gas cans.

MAY 3 - 9:41 PM

Edmonton Fire Rescue and the Edmonton Police Service send fleets to help with the Wood Buffalo fires.

MAY 3 - 10:00 PM

The Fort McMurray evacuation

WILDFIRE

Success was not without some loss of life

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Traffic lines the highway as residents leave Fort McMurray, Alta. on Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The successful evacuation of 88,000 people from Fort McMurray was a gargantuan undertaking in such a short period of time.

The evacuation orders began Sunday, as Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signed a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.

There was a tragic turn of events Wednesday when an SUV collided head on with a tractor-trailer on Highway 881, a southern escape road, killing two and shutting down the road in both directions.

Volunteer evacuation begins

A fleet of buses was commandeered to get Gregoire residents evacuated to Mac Island and residents in Prairie Creek and Centennial Park were started to get moved out.

By early Monday, the volunteer count that was set out had been reached, and those three communities were essentially cleared of residents.

Later that day, after an assessment of the fire, Prairie Creek and Gregoire residents were told they could return home if they chose, but most didn't go back, fearing the situation could escalate.

Mandatory departures ordered

Shifting winds and other weather factors combined to create a perfect storm for the wildfire to shift course and continue bearing down on the city.

At that time, Fort McMurray ordered mandatory evacuation for Beacon Hill, Abasand, Waterways, Draper, Saline Creek, Grayling Terrace, Downtown, Thickwood, Wood Buffalo and Dickinsfield.

A city divided

It was "the big move," according to Benfield. He said the city decided to split Fort McMurray in two, where those who live south of the bridge would drive south on Highway 63 and those who live north would drive north.

Benfield said he didn't make notes during this time.

At 1 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, there were 75 officers working on the ground, knocking on doors, directing traffic and using loudspeakers to notify people.

Dozens of others were also on social media, notifying people online about evacuation information.

"We had to make some decisions based on speed and direction of fire," Benfield said.

"We had to make the best decisions we could with the information we had at the time."

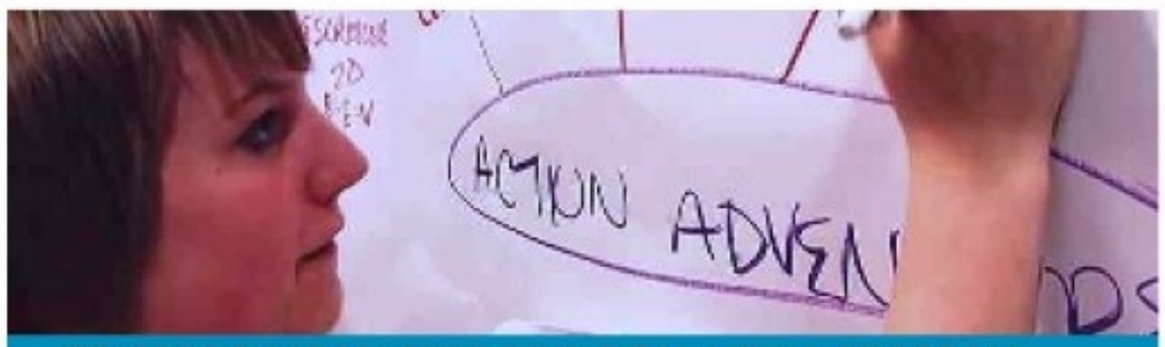
Complete clearout

By 6 p.m. Tuesday, all residents of Fort McMurray were ordered to flee. But by this point, Benfield said most of people were already on the road, either heading north or south as told.

But he commended residents for the smooth evacuation.

"This is where the community came together," he said. "People were helping people. People weren't putting themselves before others — they were trying to help their neighbour and get everybody as quickly as told."

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



EVACUATION

State of emergency in effect

Alberta declared a state of emergency Wednesday as crews frantically held back wind-whipped wildfires that have already torched 1,600 homes and other buildings in Fort McMurray, forcing all 80,000 residents to flee.

"The situation in Fort McMurray is not stable. It is unstable," Scott Long of Alberta Emergency Management told reporters in a Wednesday afternoon briefing.

"The downtown core is being held through some Herculean efforts of the structural firefighters in the area."

Municipal Affairs Minister Danielle Larivee said the state of emergency allows the province to take full control of the situation, conscript people if necessary and bulldoze structures as required.

There were dangerous and dramatic developments on multiple fronts Wednesday in a story that has made headlines worldwide with stunning video footage of trucks and cars driving past sheer walls of flame.

A helicopter battles the wildfire on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley flew up to survey the situation first-hand, while officials in the evacuation centre had to bolt to the south of the city as flames edged closer.

The blaze effectively cut Fort McMurray in two late Tuesday, forcing about 10,000 north to the safety of oilsands work camps.

The other 70,000 were sent streaming south in a bumper-to-bumper snake line of cars and trucks that stretched beyond the horizon. Some vehicles sat in ditches, the victims of engine trouble or a lack of gas.

The displaced arrived in communities of Anzac, Lac La Biche and Edmonton. Some were going as far as Calgary.

Crews had been battling the blaze since Sunday. But the situation turned destructive within minutes on Tuesday afternoon when the blaze, whipped up by winds, roared into the southwest corner of the city.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

7.5K
Officials say the out-of-control conflagration spans between 7,500 and 10,000 hectares.

MAY 4 - 10:00 AM

Wood Buffalo announces 88,000 people have been evacuated, with no reports of injury.

MAY 4 - 10:28 AM

A boil-water advisory is issued for the entire region.

MAY 4 - 11:06 AM

'Total support' offered

DISASTER RELIEF

PM Trudeau pledges federal resources to Fort McMurray

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the federal government will provide all possible assistance to Alberta as wildfires ravage Fort McMurray.

Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times, Trudeau told his caucus Wednesday.

"I've been dealing with offers of support and calls from the Atlantic provinces, all the way out to B.C., as people are looking for how they can support their friends and neighbours as people go through this difficult time."

Trudeau urged people with friends or family in Fort McMurray to make sure they are OK and ask what help they need.

Federal leaders called on Canadians who want to help to donate to the Red Cross.

The prime minister said he has already spoken to Alberta Premier Rachel Notley to offer his government's "total support."

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, in a conference call from Germany early Wednesday, confirmed a formal request for assistance has been received from the Alberta government.

Notley told a news conference that a memorandum of understanding had been signed with National Defence to provide helicopters for search-and-rescue efforts in isolated spots around Fort McMurray as well as transport aircraft to fly in firefighters. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

AGENDAS

Notley absent from premiers' conference

A disastrous wildfire raging in northern Alberta has forced government leaders in western Canada to tweak their plans to meet in Vancouver later this week and has pushed emergency management towards the front of the meeting's agenda.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley will no longer attend the 2016 Western Premiers' Conference, which is scheduled to run Thursday and Friday. Deputy Premier Sarah Hoffman, who also serves as the province's health minister, will replace Notley as Alberta's representative.

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark, who is hosting the annual gathering, said emergency management will be at the forefront of the discussions as the blaze in Fort McMurray, Alta., forces tens of thousands to flee the encroaching flames.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Alberta's in the midst of it at the moment, but every other western province experiences forest fires, floods, concerns about earthquakes and other disasters," Clark said. Still, Clark said much of the conference would also centre around the economy, given what she described as Western Canada's role in a national context.

"We have traditionally been the economic engine of the country for the last decade," she said.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

The Alberta government declares a state of emergency.

MAY 4 - 3:30 PM

The Beaton Airport Road fire burning near Fort St. John B.C. COURTESY B.C. WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT BRANCH

B.C. must contain its own fires: Clark

ASSISTANCE

Premier says not enough resources to help Alberta

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark told media Wednesday the province needs to focus on its own wildfires as a blaze continues to ravage Fort McMurray.

The province is unable to spare any firefighters to help Alberta's efforts but Clark says B.C. has done "everything (Alberta) has asked us to do" so far.

"We just don't have any more resources so we can assist in Alberta. Our offices have been in touch and what Alberta has asked of us is that we focus on trying to contain the 48 fires in B.C. in the Peace region," Clark said. "What they really need B.C. to do is make sure we are containing the fires within our own borders, so they don't jump the border. Alberta firefighters are working as hard as they possibly can and we don't want to add to their burden.

"Albertans are our closest friends in Canada and we want to be there for them."

Clark is hosting a forum of western and northern premiers Thursday (Alberta Premier Rachel Notley will not attend) and said emergency management and response will be near the top of the agenda.

BC Wildfire Service spokesman Kevin Skrepnek said unseasonable dryness and heat across much of British Columbia resembles the situation in Alberta communities such as Fort McMurray, where tens of thousands of residents have been ordered to evacuate their homes.

Since April 1, nearly 200 fires have consumed more than 230 square kilometres of land in B.C.

There are currently four evacuation alerts are in place in the Peace region, including a renewed alert for residents living near the 70 square kilometre Beaton Airport Road blaze, 50 kilometres northwest of Fort St. John. WITH FILES FROM CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Donate at liquor stores
B.C. government-run liquor stores are accepting donations to Red Cross relief in Fort McMurray.

The money collected at B.C. Liquor Stores will assist the Red Cross in Alberta provide wildfire evacuees with shelter, food and water. It will also help reunite families and aide as the community rebuilds.

Monies collected at BCL stores between April 27 and May 3 will go to earthquake recovery efforts in Ecuador as planned. METRO

HUSAR

Search-and-rescue heads off to Alberta

Jeff Hodson
Metro | Vancouver

Two members of Vancouver's heavy urban search-and-rescue (HUSAR) team headed to Alberta Wednesday to provide incident management and logistic support in the ongoing rescue efforts in Fort McMurray.

The rescuers were invited by a similar search-and-rescue team in Calgary. The two will assist in the efforts and report back to the HUSAR team, according to a release from the City of Vancouver.

Mayor Gregor Robertson and City Manager Sadhu Johnston have reached out to Albertan counterparts and offered further assistance as needed.

Vancouver's HUSAR team is made up of 120 members with medical, search and rescue and engineering backgrounds. They were notably deployed to New Orleans during the Hurricane Katrina disaster in 2005.

TRANSPORTATION

Van city cyclists most avid bike commuters

Vancouver has the highest percentage of residents who bike to work, council heard.

City staff presented its annual monitoring report to council Wednesday, which shows that 10 per cent of all work commutes in Vancouver are made via cycling.

That already surpasses the city's 2020 target to have seven per cent of all trips made by bicycle, which makes Vancouver the top city in the country when it comes to biking to work.

City data says cycling trips in the city increased 32 per cent from 2014 to 2015. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

The city says cycling trips increased 32 per cent from 2014 to 2015. If that rate of growth continues, staff believe Vancouver could overtake Portland for the highest cycling commuting rate in all of North America.

"These new biking records clearly show that the city's investments in Vancouver's active transportation network are paying off big," boasted Mayor Gregor Robertson, an avid cyclist himself and no stranger to criticism for his bike lane advocacy, in a statement. "There's more work to do and council will continue working to make Vancouver an even more safe, accessible and vibrant city for residents of all ages and abilities."

Vehicles still make up the larges portion of work commutes (41 per cent), followed by public transit and walking (24 per cent each). MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

CRIME

Ex-child actor accused of robbing Sechelt bank

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

A former 1980s child actor has been accused of allegedly robbing a bank in Sechelt, B.C., while wearing a wig and sunglasses.

Deleriyes Joe Cramer, 42, who lives in Gibsons, has been charged with robbery, disguise with intent to commit an indictable offence, failure to stop for a peace officer and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, according to Sunshine Coast RCMP.

Cramer, who used the stage name Joey Cramer, is best known as star of the 1986 film Flight of the Navigator and Runaway in 1984 according to IMDB.com.

Around 3 p.m. on April 28, police responded to a bank robbery on Teredo Street in Sechelt.

Officers arrived within minutes, but the suspect had already fled the bank with an undisclosed amount of money.

"This was a very frightening experience for the staff and customers inside the premises," said Const. Harrison Mohr, spokesman for Sunshine Coast RCMP.

An investigation revealed that the suspect was wearing a wig with almost shoulder-length scraggly hair, a bandana worn over the top of the wig, sunglasses, a dark jacket with a large reddish design on the back of it and a black shoulder bag.

Despite wearing a disguise, police quickly identified a suspect.

Cramer was arrested in Gibsons on Sunday. He appeared in court Tuesday, and is scheduled to appear again May 10.

Premier Christy Clark gives the keynote address at the annual Truck Loggers Association Convention & Trade Show in Vancouver on Jan. 16, 2014. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minimum wage to rise to $11.25 in 2017

ECONOMY

Premier says increase will happen in two phases

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

British Columbia will drag itself out of Canada's minimum wage basement, Premier Christy Clark announced Wednesday.

The province will boost the minimum wage to $11.25 by September 2017 in two phases, starting with a 40 cent increase Sept. 15 of this year and a further 30 cents in 2017.

Clark said this is the sixth time her government has increased the minimum wage since she took office, but that hasn't stopped British Columbia from slipping from first to 10th among all provinces and territories.

By the time the minimum wage hits $11.25, she said B.C. should have the third highest minimum wage in the country.

"We didn't anticipate we'd slip so quickly, so we want to get back to third," Clark said. "We are the fastest growing economy in the country. With an economy growing this fast, we should absolutely make sure people earning minimum wage in this province are doing better than they are today."

> **If you work full time, you should be able to live above the poverty line.**
> Irene Lanzinger

But the wage hike is still nowhere near enough, according to the B.C. Federation of Labour.

The federation has been campaigning for a $15 minimum wage, which is just enough to put full-time B.C. workers over the poverty line.

"It doesn't get us to the fundamental principle that if you work full time, you should be able to live above the poverty line," said BCFed president Irene Lanzinger. "We did the calculation and someone working full time under the new minimum wage (of $10.85 this September) is still living $5,500 below the poverty line. That's still a long way to go."

Given that British Columbia has the highest cost of living in the country and that 27 per cent of the province's workforce earns minimum wage, Lanzinger said B.C. should strive to have the highest minimum wage.

A recent BCFed poll, conducted by Insights West, found 83 per cent of British Columbians agreed the minimum wage should put full time workers above the poverty line.

Lanzinger said labour groups will continue to push for a $15 minimum wage despite Wednesday's announcement.

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, May 5, 2016

RUSSELL WANGERSKY: WE'RE WITH YOU, FORT MCMURRAY

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work? It stretches families far apart, but it weaves us together across a big country.

They're talking about Fort McMurray on the St. John's, N.L. Metrobus.

People don't usually talk much on the Metrobus, you understand. But they're talking today, and it's a conversation being heard across the Atlantic provinces, from Tim Hortons in Sydney to small towns in the Annapolis Valley. A simple trip online finds reporters from Newfoundland to Charlottetown to Halifax asking Atlantic Canadians in Alberta to get in touch.

The talk started Tuesday night with the first evacuation order in Fort McMurray. Social media lit up with first-hand tweets and Facebook posts about the fire. Soon, there was a complete evacuation, video showing the fire terrifyingly close, and people at this end of the country posting information about how to make telephone donations to the Red Cross.

On Wednesday, fire officials were watching the weather, expecting wind, and posting grim lists of the areas hardest hit by the advancing fire: "Beacon Hill — 80 per cent loss of homes; Timberlea — 12 trailers lost on Mckinlay Cres."

For so many East Coast workers and their families, Fort McMurray is a long way west, but also the worksite next door.

The oilpatch may be slowing, but it's far from stopped: scores of Atlantic Canadians either travel there for work or have moved to the northern Alberta city, putting down roots. Some people (not completely glibly) call it Newfoundland and Labrador's second largest city. Cape Breton could say the same.

It's the great class equalizer on many East Coast flights: workers sometimes use their frequent flyer status to move up into first class, bringing baseball caps and work jackets into the rarefied land of Air Canada's Zone 1.

Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

HANG IN THERE **You don't have to tell people on the East Coast about the devastation in Alberta** — the oilpatch is 'as near as a nephew or niece,' Russell Wangersky writes.
MICHAEL DE ADDER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

It also means that Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

By Wednesday morning, Edmonton was expecting 20,000 evacuees, and thousands more had gone north. It's an evacuation of astounding proportions and it's touching people across this region quickly, people wondering and worrying about friends and family on the move.

How close to home is Fort Mac to people on the East Coast? You don't have to tell anyone here about it — it's as near as a nephew or niece.

At The Telegram in St. John's, the news editor reposted Tweets in almost real-time from his nephews, their car turned around by a transformer explosion and forced north out of the city.

One of The Telegram's reporters used to work at Fort McMurray Today, the city's main newspaper; his daughter, born in the Alberta city, made her parents turn off the television because she can't watch the fire burning places she knows.

And there's this exchange, posted on Facebook by my niece, recounting a conversation with her four-year-old about my niece's sister in Fort McMurray:

"Mommy what's going on?"

"It's a fire, sweetheart."

"Is Auntie Christina OK?"

"Yes buddy."

"Does she still have a bed?"

"I don't think so, sweet pea."

"It's OK mommy. She can sleep here in my bed."

In the office next to mine, an editor hasn't slept, following a friend's journey — husband, wife, seven-year-old twins and the family dog — north out of Fort McMurray, into huge highway gridlock, then south again, taking their chances along a previously closed highway, until there's a 1:30 a.m. post saying they are safely out of range of the fire: "We were 8 hrs in our car and finally made it out ... It's surreal to not know what exactly we are facing in the next few days."

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work?

It stretches families far apart but it weaves us together across a big country, as well.

I remember, years ago, talking to a woman who ran a lounge in a small town on the southern tip of Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula. The town was too small to keep the lounge running, so it was closed most of the time. We were in an airplane, heading west, but she'd flown east to open the lounge for a wake.

She lived in Fort McMurray, working as a manager in a hardware store. Her husband was driving a dump truck at Syncrude — her son, too. At the time, one daughter was working at a rape crisis centre, the other at a vet's office.

Every time there was a wedding or a funeral, she'd fly home to open the only lounge in the area.

There are ties that go both ways, regardless of the distance. And Fort Mac is on Eastern Canadian minds and lips today.

Russell Wangersky is the Atlantic region columnist for TC Media.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metro*view*

Of course Alberta's wildfire is political. Everything is political.

Burnt-out cars, charred and flattened homes, air soft with smoke in a grey-hued sunrise. The fire had eaten much on its first terrible day, before growing ever wilder and uncontrolled.

"It was just like an apocalypse," one man told CBC Radio, of the walls of flame that lined the highways and kissed the treetops and the black inferno sky above Fort McMurray: the heart of the oilsands.

Until submerged in a fire of biblical proportions, Fort Mac had long functioned as a kind of shorthand for Alberta vs. Canada animosity. The place where bitumen was squeezed from sand, imagined and unvisited by most Canadians who nonetheless hold some opinion about our economic dependence on the oil industry and the threat of climate change.

(Never mind that Fort Mac runs on the work of average Canadians, the brains of the oilsands reside elsewhere.)

Local fire chief Darby Allen called it a "nasty, dirty" fire, adjectives uttered in the past to describe the belabored way oil companies extract their resource from the land, transforming it.

And that metaphor, of Fort McMurray as the heart of oilsands darkness, was on the minds of some as the fire broke: "I'm glad the #FortMacFire is happening in the province most responsible for causing climate change that caused the fire in the first place," tweeted one Vancouver man, displaying gross callousness, even if many others had already, silently, seen a terrible irony.

Far more measured was Elizabeth May who, pressed by reporters, called it "a disaster that is very related to the global climate crisis," according to the National Observer.

Most perversely, some even accused a "disgusting" Alberta Premier Rachel Notley of using the fire to appear to care about an oil town in a display of crass opportunism.

The larger story, of course, has been national dismay at the unfolding tragedy and an unusually united amount of love flowing towards the oil rigs.

But wistful calls for everyone to set aside politics ring false. A wildfire may be indiscriminate, but people and places are always political. Inevitably, they taint events, and they will taint this, too.

Before it is satiated, the fire will devastate tens of thousands of people, and the miracle is that no one has died.

The politics is, as always, as you see it. As for any kind of reckoning, the most important is to come, when those forced to flee return to tally what is left of their lives.

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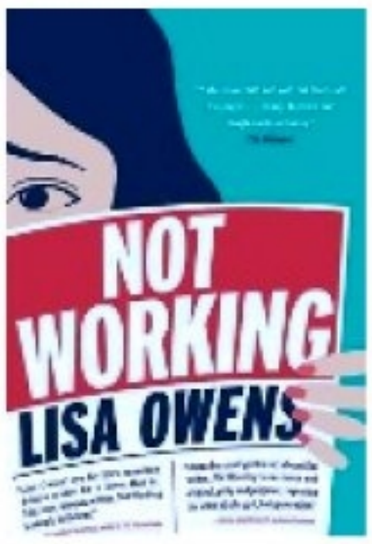
You are not what you do

INTERVIEW

Chasing a dream job becomes futile for character

Melita Kuburas
Metro | Canada



A friend and former colleague who works in journalism once explained her theory about the difference between a "dream job" and a "fantasy job."

The dream job is attainable; it's something you work towards, she says. A fantasy job is what you wish you were doing when you're totally burnt out. (Hers was municipal parks worker. Mine? Marine biologist.)

But for many adults who don't have a defined career path, the dream job, too, might as well be imaginary.

That's the case in Not Working, the first novel from Lisa Owens, 30, in which the main character Claire Flannery quits a "creative communications" job she dislikes to figure out what she really wants to do.

Claire's time off is spent loitering in coffee shops, pressuring busy friends into just *one more* drink at the bar, and watching grotesque online videos.

"She has this grand idea that it's going to be this journey of self-discovery that she can direct, and that she can make herself a better person. Instead it becomes this introspective time of inertia," says Owens.

Her character is smart but self-destructive — a lovable screwball with knack for pointed observation, even in a hungover state.

"Did you not even get *dressed*?" asks Claire's boyfriend, a doctor, as he comes home to find her re-watching a clip of a sperm whale being dissected. By this point, she has given up on Ulysses.

The idea for the story was partly influenced by a stretch of time off Owens had in between jobs a few years ago.

"I was going to go to all these art galleries and do all of this cultural stuff," says Owens. In reality, she watched a lot of TV and met friends for lunch, which wasn't fun because unlike her, they were busy.

"I was very much aware that everyone else I knew was working on a different clock. If I hadn't had a job to go back to, how would that have felt?" she says, of how the idea formed.

One impact of this ideleness on Claire is anxiety — she inspects every mole with the same suspicion she applies to her well-meaning boyfriend's attempt at words of encouragement.

Without a job and daily routine, everything else suddenly starts to come into question, says Owens, and they do for Claire. Should she be going to the gym more? Is it too late to have children? Does she even like living in London?

The character is in her late twenties, though her exact age is never specified in the book. She's relatable to anyone who has ever dreaded the question "So what do you do?" at a party.

"I think there's a certain pressure on my generation to think that you should feel like, this amazing sense of fulfillment in your day job and I think it can actually be quite dangerous and quite tough ... on people like Claire, who don't really know what that is," says Owens.

The danger, she adds, is they may feel like they're wasting away their potential by working a job that's just a 9 to 5.

"So that was definitely something I wanted to challenge — that idea that 'oh, you should just be absolutely loving everything you do.'"

Chasing a dream job, then, is probably a waste of time — it doesn't necessarily exist, says Owens.

There is a lot of pressure on her generation to find that "**dream job,**" even though that ideal 9-to-5 doesn't exist, says author **Lisa Owens, 30.** COURTESY ALEXANDER JAMES

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Stories of the variety store

DEBUT NOVEL

Author sheds light on Korean immigrant experience

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Author Ann Choi captures the shrinking generation of Korean variety-store owners in her debut novel, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety. HANDOUT

Sometimes it takes a little push from an unlikely place to fulfil a personal dream. For Ann Choi, a guidance counsellor at a Toronto high school, it came in 2007 when she asked a struggling student what he wanted to do with his life. He responded by asking her the same question right back. Not wanting to be a hypocrite, Choi answered quickly. After all, she knew exactly what she wanted: to write a book.

"That night I went home and did a lot of soul searching and from that moment on, I committed to writing," she says.

Choi also knew exactly what she wanted to write. Since the early 1990s, she had been holding onto story ideas about the Korean immigrant experience, specifically those of young women who felt torn between the demands of their parents and the desire to be a "typical" Canadian teenager. As a sociology major at University of Toronto, she had worked on a project interviewing Korean-Canadian women and discovered many shared a similar narrative. "There was a lot of frustration with cultural expectations and the immigrant dream," Choi says. "And a lot of frustration with our mothers. We felt a sense of burden because 90 per cent or more of our parents were variety-store owners."

A composite of those women, and her own life, became the inspiration for Mary — or Yu-Rhee — the protagonist of Choi's debut novel, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety, published by Simon & Schuster Canada. Mary, who lives above her parents' convenience store, struggles with hormonally charged teenage emotions and experiences, but still must act like an adult, knowing very well that her first priority is always to her family's business and livelihood — as her mother never lets her forget.

"When other kids got to hang out at the mall after school, most of us were stamping packages of instant soup or working the cash register," Choi says.

For those in the community, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety will resonate in its accuracy and details, but for those who only head into their local convenience stores for milk and newspapers, the book is a revealing look into private lives. "While most everyone knows a Korean shopkeeper, most people won't know about the story behind the counter," says Choi.

For Mary's family — and Choi's, who owned a store on Toronto's Queen West — that meant a life of where families could never eat meals together, and community get-togethers happened late at night. While growing up, Choi loved the intersection of people that came into the store, but it could also be a very scary place, as her character Mary horrifyingly learns.

Choi was also motivated to tell Mary's story to document the shrinking generation of Korean variety-store owners, as a way to both educate her own 16-year-old daughter and to draw attention to the culture for which she has such pride.

"I wanted to capture all this," she says. "The Korean variety-store generation is now dying off. Our parents sacrificed and put us through school and now, my brothers and I, we don't work in variety stores anymore. Unless we write these stories down my daughter will never know what my parents did, and I did, and what our lives were like."

> **When other kids got to hang out at the mall after school, most of us were stamping packages of instant soup or working the cash register** Ann Choi

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

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THE MANY FACES OF MARCIA CLARK

The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story
The Ryan Murphy-produced anthology series starred Sarah Paulson (American Horror Story) as Clark. Her performance was critically lauded and more sentimental than earlier portrayals.

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt
The Netflix series brought on co-creator Tina Fey and comedian Jerry Minor for three episodes as Clark and Chris Darden in harsh portrayals as buffoons.

American Tragedy
Lawrence Schiller brought his own book to the TV screen in 2000 with this made-for-TV movie, which focused more on the defence team and had Diana LaMar playing Clark.

Saturday Night Live
Always poised to tackle current events, SNL parodied the trial in the '90s, featuring comedians Laura Kightlinger and Nancy Carell (née Walls).

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How Marcia went from punchline to real person

CRIME

Former O.J. Simpson prosecutor now an author

In the televised "15-month nightmare" that was the O.J. Simpson trial, Marcia Clark woke up beaten. "I was just so burnt out. I was emotionally depleted, physically depleted," says the former prosecutor. "I couldn't even conceive of walking back into the courtroom."

She became a kind of punchline, the lawyer who bungled the Trial of the Century, a perceived slam dunk. From Saturday Night Live skits in the 1990s to a Tina Fey parody on Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt last year, Clark was a long-running joke.

But more than 20 years later, she's newly venerated, thanks to the FX miniseries depicting her courtroom nightmare: American Crime Story, in which actress Sarah Paulson played the former prosecutor to much acclaim, including Clark's. "We are now understood more like real people instead of cartoons," says Clark, who credits the popular series for adding "more layers" to her media portrayal, going behind the scenes with her and legal partner Chris Darden, whom she calls her "rock" during the trial.

"Whenever there's a major public event that gets covered for a period of time everybody kind of winds up being caricatured. That happened to all of us, too."

The anthology series ended its first season in April, but the year is just beginning for Clark, who has become a successful crime novelist. Her latest is called Blood Defense and follows a criminal defence lawyer handling a high-profile double-murder case, which Clark knows a thing or two about.

The O.J. Simpson trial began in 1994 after the murders of Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and waiter Ron Goldman. Simpson was acquitted of all charges after a defence team led by Johnnie Cochran presented the argument he'd been framed by a racist LAPD, a strategy that many feel distracted from the victims.

For Clark, the high-profile trial meant public scrutiny. Naturally, watching the show brought on a "weird mix of emotions," she says. "It's very difficult to go back and remember everything. It digs up all the memories; the pain and the sadness."

She'll be reminded again in June, when CTV and ESPN air a new doc, O.J.: Made in America.

But a silver lining for the formerly misunderstood attorney is that she's become a kind of millennial idol with the FX series. Many of the show's viewers were in diapers when the trial made headlines. They're watching with a different, "much hipper" perspective than their parents, Clark has noticed. She's not a punch line anymore but a trailblazer.

As for the man at the centre of her televised nightmare two decades ago, Simpson is in prison on unrelated charges and is eligible for parole in 2017.

Is there any doubt in Clark's mind that he committed those murders in 1994? "How could there be any?" she asks. "None."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Marcia Clark, former O.J. Simpson prosecutor, has a new book out called Blood Defense, the same year that FX miniseries American Crime Story brought the Trial of the Century back into the spotlight. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

The Good Witch lulls viewers into a Chardonnay coma

THE SHOW: Good Witch, Season 2, Episode 2 (W)
THE MOMENT: Cassie's advice

The Good Witch has Cassie Nightingale smiling enigmatically — a lot. CONTRIBUTED

Cassie Nightingale (Catherine Bell), who magically sells customers whatever they need, is training a new salesgirl in her store (or rather, shoppe), Bell Book and Candle — located on Main Street in Middleton, USA, where it's always Christmas or Halloween. The salesgirl had some accident with her hands, which prevents her from pursuing her dream job. (Or something like that. I might have dozed off. Trust me, it doesn't matter.)

"How can I help?" the salesgirl asks.

"Oh, there's always something to be done at the Bell Book and Candle," Cassie says, smiling enigmatically.

Sure enough, the salesgirl solders a glass box. She's cured!

I have to apologize to the women of North America. I knew you were tired, but I didn't know you were this tired. The only reason anyone could watch this show is that they're so stressed, they need this tranquilizer in television form.

Every moment of the series is the same moment, engineered to lull viewers into a Chardonnay coma: Somebody asks Cassie what he/she should do, and she smiles enigmatically (her sole expression, because her face is frozen stiff).

I actually worry about Good Witch falling into the wrong hands — this is some weapons-grade treacle. Vladimir Putin could become the showrunner, bore us into submissive somnolence, and take over Canada while we nap.

So if you're ever on the subway home thinking, "I'm so wrung out, maybe I'll watch Good Witch," call me instead and I'll come brush your hair. No one should be this tired.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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Husband and wife team share secrets of The Good Wife

Will The Good Wife's current crisis reunite Alicia with Peter? CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

As series is about to wrap, couple talks their trade

As The Good Wife comes in for a landing after seven seasons, it finds its namesake heroine, Alicia Florrick, facing the same dilemma as when it began: defending her husband, now the governor of Illinois, who is mired in a scandal that could send him back to prison.

Will this crisis reunite Alicia (played by Julianna Margulies) with Peter (Chris Noth), from whom she's been estranged as he awaits a jury's verdict?

Or will she finally divorce the man who, in the series' 2009 premiere, was the disgraced Chicago-area state's attorney heading to prison for corruption involving prostitutes?

After all these years as a dutiful lawyer, mother and wife, what will be Alicia's future path?

All presumably will be revealed when The Good Wife concludes Sunday at 9 p.m. EDT on CBS and Global.

A legal drama and much more, The Good Wife has been that rare program on a mainstream broadcast network that could stand alongside the cable-network exotica certifying television's new golden age.

The Good Wife has always been genre-defying, neither a copy of anything that came before or, thus far, tempting any programmer to try to copy it.

How could that be?

As Robert and Michelle King — the show's creators and executive producers — continue to occupy what had been its Brooklyn offices but now is home for BrainDead, their upcoming CBS summer series, this husband-and-wife team recently mused on what made The Good Wife so good. Their edited comments follow:

A robust universe of characters

It's "really tricky" to maintain, said Michelle.

"You tell serialized stories with not just your core cast, but with ancillary characters who aren't regular, and you don't have access to those actors on a regular basis.

But we wanted to be able to tell what's going on not only with Alicia, say, but also with her mom (Stockard Channing) and her brother (Dallas Roberts)," just two of the show's countless recurring characters.

"It becomes a real challenge for everyone in the production to juggle all those actors' schedules."

Splendid actors inhabiting complex roles

"The writing sets a tone for the actors and then gets out of the way," said Robert. "For instance, in our fourth-ever episode we needed an antagonist, but instead of a mean and angry male lawyer, we thought, 'What if it's a pregnant woman, and what if she uses her pregnancy to break up depositions whenever she wants to: "I feel a pain!"'

"Then we brought in Martha Plimpton, who sent that idea into the stratosphere. THEN we needed to have her back, because we wanted to know more of who this character is and more of what Martha would do with it."

Soap with sophistication

The narrative digs deep. At the same time, it snacks on melodrama as viewers join the show's creators in having their cake and eating it too.

"We want the actors to have real reactions, even to ludicrous events," Robert said.

"In the beginning, viewers were commenting on how the lawyers kept winning cases, which is not very realistic.

"So in the third season, we decided they would start getting prosecuted for (possibly) bribing judges.

"The more you can hang a lantern on any ludicrous elements, the more you can then make the characters respond realistically: We even had Diane Lockhart wondering, 'How ARE we winning so many cases?!"'

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Fiberglass igloos being used by Hawaiian church as form of non-profit housing

MEET THE CONDO

Revel on the rooftop

CONTRIBUTED

Project overview

The Burquitlam Capital is a 193-residential unit, 23-storey high-rise development. There will be over 10,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor, which will include a restaurant, coffee shop and a number of retail stores. Residents will have wonderful views toward Burnaby Lake, south to the Fraser River and north to the mountains.

Housing amenities

Homes boast high ceilings, quartz countertops, designer appliances and hardwood laminate flooring. Communal amenities include an exercise room, a kid's play area, a social lounge and a rooftop garden — perfect for those sunny days.

Location and transit

With the Evergreen Line only a two-minute walk away from home, getting to Vancouver — whether for work or a night out — is a quick 30-minute SkyTrain ride. Lougheed Town Centre is five minutes away, while Brentwood station is 20. Burquitlam is very cyclist-friendly and has a large network of bike paths.

In the neighbourhood

The Burquitlam Capital lies on the border of Burnaby and Coquitlam. It's a mere stone's throw away from the Stoney Creek Trail Network, the public library and a recreation complex. There are also plenty of schools, grocery stores and shopping outlets nearby.

NEED TO KNOW

What: The Burquitlam Capital
Developer: Magusta Development
Builder: Marcon Construction
Designer: False Creek Design Group
Location: Burquitlam
Building: Mixed-use high-rise
Sizes: 1,276 sq. ft. townhouse, 904 sq. ft. penthouse
Model: Two-bedroom condo, three-bedroom townhouse, two-bedroom penthouse
Pricing: Starting from $446,900, $699,900 and $669,900, respectively
Occupancy: Fall 2018
Sales centre: 509 Clarke Road (enter from North Road side)
Phone: 604-492-1150
Website: burquitlamcapital.com

CRAFTING

DIY heirloom tea towels for Mother's Day

Pretty tea towels are a useful addition to any kitchen and are extra special when printed with cherished family recipes.

Turn treasured recipes into thoughtful keepsake gifts perfect for Mother's Day using iron-on transfers.

Raid your family's recipe box for that treasured recipe to make these gorgeous towels.

Then wrap them up with baker's twine with a special cookbook and you've created a unique gift.

Step 1: Gather and shop for the supplies

You will need:

- A cotton or linen tea towel
- Iron-on transfers for light-coloured fabric
- Handwritten recipe
- Iron (you don't need a steam setting)
- A scanner, computer and printer

REMEMBER
Ensure that you "mirror" or "flip" the image so that it prints backwards and the recipe can be read.

Step 2: Choose a recipe and scan it into a computer

Scan the recipe. We scanned the image in colour and again in black and white. Alter the image using image software if you like.

Step 3: Print it out

Before selecting the image to be printed ensure that you remember to "mirror" or "flip" the image so that it prints backwards. When you iron it onto the fabric it will appear the correct way. Print the image onto the transfer paper according to the manufacturer's directions.

Step 4: Trim the printed design

If desired, trim the printed design, leaving approximately 1 inch (2.5 centimetres) around the printed area.

Step 5: Place and iron the design onto the tea towel

Place the printed design print side down onto the fabric. Iron the design on to the fabric according to the manufacturer's directions (do not use a steam setting).

Let cool. Carefully peel away the backing paper to reveal the design.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Writing out a recipe in your own writing, even if you got it from a cookbook, gives the tea towels a personal touch. DEBRA NORTON/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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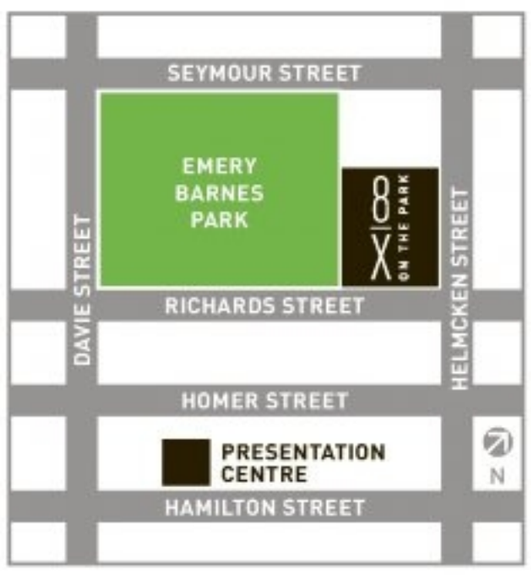

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Working antiques into your decor

MIX AND MATCH

Vintage pieces help to create unique look

The introduction of antiques into your home can provide a beautiful layer of design depth.

The trick is to select just a few pieces you love and work them into your decor. Loving antiques doesn't mean filling each room from top to bottom to create a reproduction of a historic home. Vintage pieces can easily complement contemporary furniture and be every bit as functional and, because most are one-of-a-kind, they help to create a look individual to you.

A few great ways to work these amazing pieces into your designs:

Vintage pieces can easily complement contemporary furniture, like this 18th century gold gilt French side chair. GLEN PELOSO/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reworked antiques

The French 18th-century Bergère chair has been reproduced for literally hundreds of years and has inspired many other chairs like it.

The exposed wood is sometimes painted and sometimes stained. Nothing can beat the patina of an antique chair and, once the chair is recovered it becomes a brilliant combination of old and new.

Combined time periods

The dining table doesn't need to be the eight-piece set that you got at your local furniture store.

The combination of elements from various time periods allows you to create a truly unique look.

Also, the combination of wood colours provides an attractive texture and additional layer to the design of the room.

The key to success when combining is to stay within the same time period or go more than two time periods apart so the final "look" is clearly intentional.

Repurposed antiquity

The draper's table, repurposed as a credenza/desk, retains its rich, wooden beauty and spun details of the leg.

But it needed a new job title since it's no longer in use as an 18th-century work table in a draper's shop. Ideally, the antiques in your home should serve a purpose, allowing you to live in your home as opposed to just look at it.

Strength and balance

If you are working with strong architectural details like ornate coffers, dental details on the crown moulding, or extra tall and detailed doors, you need furniture and accessories to provide balance.

Conversely, if you are drawn to design elements that are commanding — such as wall treatments — the additional visual strength provided by antiques are a worthy match.

The esthetic impact of each element creates a visual balance.

GLEN PELOSO/
FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Glen Peloso is principal designer of Peloso Alexander Interiors, national design editor of Canadian Home Trends magazine and a design expert on the Marilyn Denis Show on CTV.

+ MID-CENTURY

One of the most popular antique selections currently is mid-century modern.

When creating a room that has the feel of mid-century modern, injecting a piece that is truly from that period can ground the look you are attempting to achieve.

The current reproductions of the time period are usually the most iconic elements from the era.

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First-time homebuyers tips

Plan ahead, expect the unexpected, says real-estate expert

Plan ahead when looking to buy a home by setting a budget to account for emergencies and little extras. ISTOCK

Buying your first home is an emotional time. The entire process of viewings, making offers and finally getting the keys is full of excitement, fear and anticipation. First-time homebuyers — or "property virgins," as they were called on the hit HGTV show — have a lot to learn as they navigate the real-estate waters for the first time. Erica Nielsen, VP of Home Equity Financing at RBC, offers five pieces of wisdom to help buy with confidence:

1. Know what you can afford
Many first-time buyers start their home search by asking what neighbourhood they want to live in. "This can lead to disappointment," says Nielsen. "They get their heart set on a certain neighbourhood and then find out they cannot afford it." Be realistic about what you can afford and look for homes within that price range.

2. Consider the hidden costs
There's more to the cost of owning a home than just your mortgage and utilities. "There's the first time you go to shovel your walk and realize you don't have a snow shovel," says Nielsen. While a shovel is a small expense, add to that a lawn mower to cut your grass, painting supplies, and all the miscellaneous items that come with owning a home — not to mention maintenance costs — and you could end up spending a couple of thousand dollars a year that you hadn't anticipated.

3. Seek advice from various people
Buying your first home can be a daunting experience. Surround yourself with people who can provide you with advice on everything from how to purchase your home to how to secure financing and ultimately how to maintain your property. "It's the single biggest expense you're ever going to have in your life," says Nielsen. "You need all these kinds of specialists in your community to provide you with the competence for that purchase."

4. Keep your lifestyle in mind
Mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities ... all these bills and more can seriously change the lifestyle you've grown accustomed to. Consider how much you spend on entertainment, education and vacations and ask yourself what you're willing to give up to own your own home. "Sometimes that means waiting longer, saving more before you get into the market," says Nielsen, who advises first-time buyers to consider all the components that make for a satisfying life and weigh these against home ownership.

5. Look ahead
When Nielsen and her husband purchased their first home, their financial adviser asked her to consider what her life would look like several years down the road and to purchase the biggest house she could afford rather than settling for a "starter home." Nielsen sat on the sidelines for a while until she was able to save enough money to buy a family home with an extra bedroom. "That allowed us to have two children and not have to move," she says.

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When decluttering, something's gotta give

HOME ORGANIZATION

Getting rid of excess stuff is liberating, experts say

Tanya Enberg

If you're dealing with a home long overdue for a makeover, remember this: The items you remove may be more important than the ones you bring in.

Yes, lately it seems the war against too-much stuff and clutter is reaching new heights, thanks to the meteoric rise of Marie Kondo, a tidying guru and author of the New York Times bestseller, The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing.

Kondo's lessons include a how-to guide for creating the perfect sock drawer and dismissing, with gratitude, any item that no longer sparks joy.

But while creating serene, functional spaces may seem like a refined art of late, it's certainly nothing new.

Since 2005, Clare Kumar has been making personal spaces feel lighter and more manageable through her professional organizing company, Streamlife. To achieve this, usually something's gotta give.

In other words, the process likely involves hauling some stuff out.

The first step, however, is deciding how a particular space will be used.

"Is it music, television, is it game playing, is it reading?" asked Kumar.

"What are the three to five activities you hope to accomplish in that space? Then, identify how you want that space to feel and how many visual things you have around you."

Professional organizer Clare Kumar says to set priorities when decluttering. JONATHAN NICHOLLS

Once those priorities are set, she says you can begin to "liberate" items that no longer have purpose.

"It's much easier to let go if you've got your priorities clear in your mind," she explained.

"Instead of the angst of letting go, I like to look at it as setting something free so maybe someone else can enjoy it, and maybe that also liberates your space to embrace those things you've chosen as priorities for the life you're living now, not the life you used to live. Is it really doing what it needs to do for you?"

Growing up, Erinn Clark was taught the value of organized living.

Her mother, a dedicated minimalist, was known to appear with a garbage bag in hand and ask Clark and her siblings to toss out toys they no longer used.

The family often shopped at second-hand stores and exchanged modest gifts on special occasions. Her parents preferred to give "experiences over stuff," she recalled.

"There was always a special toy or two, but the big gift was driving to Buffalo and getting a night in a hotel with a swimming pool," said Clark.

Those early lessons stuck.

Clark and her husband strive to pass them along to their three children, ages four, six and eight, though it hasn't always been easy.

"Our first real battle was when we had our first child," said Clark.

"At the time, we lived in a 700-square-foot bungalow and we really didn't have much space. We received so many hand-me-downs and gifts, clothes, toys and stuffed animals, it was getting incredibly overwhelming."

According to Kumar, a common roadblock to parting with our belongings is guilt.

"It might be something that you've paid a lot of money for, so you're feeling guilty about that," she said.

"There is a lot of permission that comes into this, for people to give themselves permission to let go of x, y and z and say, this is my life and my space and I get to shape it."

Clark and her husband quickly made peace with clearing out unnecessary items.

"Gifts were the hardest to deal with because there was a feeling of needing to appreciate them, but we just didn't have room for everything," she says.

"We began re-gifting, passing them along, or donating to charitable organizations. At first, we felt kind of guilty for passing along brand new baby gifts, but soon it felt pretty good to get it out of the house."

Recently, the family moved from Toronto to Vietnam, a process that forced them to closely re-examine their belongings.

They kept the items they used daily, along with expensive ones they would use in the future, and a few personal treasures, including sweaters hand knit by family members and artwork made by their children.

"All the rest can go because we know someone else might find it more useful than us or might love it more than us," Clark said

Moving or undergoing home renovations are common catalysts for finally dealing with accumulation, Kumar says.

"I can't tell you the number of homes I've been in that have had a main-floor renovation and before it started, they put everything in the basement instead of making long-term decisions for it — they're deferring decisions."

When reimagining a space, less is often more, says Kumar.

"Work to understand what the space can take and how much you have to let go to preserve the vision you're aiming for," she said.

"It might mean reducing 30 per cent."

Lynn MacDonald and her husband regularly clean house. With two girls, ages three and six, MacDonald says it's an "ongoing process."

"We are a busy working family and things get messy by the weekend. We try to do a family clean and decluttering, sending items to the charity shop or handing clothes down to friends, as part of our routine.

"My husband can't stand clutter. I bought him the Kondo book, he read it straight away, and I know he is aching to send it to the charity shop, but I am insisting he holds onto it until I have a chance for a good read of it."

CLARE KUMAR'S FOUR-STEP 'PLAN'

P: Is for 'prioritize.' Map out how you want to use a room and how you want it to feel.
L: Is for 'liberate.' This means letting go of pieces that no longer serve a purpose for the life you want to live.
A: Is for 'arrange.' This means organizing the furniture and contents you've chosen to keep. Aim to make items accessible and well preserved.
N: Is for 'nurture.' Take care of your belongings, put them away and "regularly edit, examine consumption patterns so you're not creating this pressure situation again," Kumar advised.

BUILD ON WHAT YOU'VE GOT

How home additions are stacking up

With real-estate markets varying across the country, the days of buying a starter home and then moving as the family grows may be over — or at least, on hold.

Additions or extensions to the home are becoming increasingly common, says HGTV interior designer and contractor Melissa Davis. This is especially the case in urban centres where homes are older, and smaller.

"Homeowners stick with the house and make it what they need it to be as their family grows and their finances improve," Davis said.

The most common additions include adding a living room beyond the kitchen at the back of a home, or moving the kitchen from elsewhere so it opens onto the backyard or garden, Davis says.

"The trend is to do the back elevation on the main floor as all glass," she said. "If it's a more traditional home, it's a series of French doors, and if it's a modern home they will go with the accordion doors."

With a two-level addition, the second-storey typically includes turning a smaller bedroom into a master suite, complete with a walk-in closet and spa bathroom that has a separate shower and big soaker tub, she said.

Before work on an addition can get started, however, there are mandatory steps homeowners must follow. That process typically starts at city hall.

There's a cap on how much structure can exist on a given lot, and that can vary by neighbourhood.

If your city says your home has maxed out its allowable space, or if your plans for the addition go beyond what the zoning bylaw allows, all is not lost, says contractor Evan Bramson of Bramson Construction.

You can apply for an adjustment by submitting your architect's plans to a city adjustments committee.

"Typically, the rules are if another neighbour has already been awarded an adjustment similar to the one you're asking for, you're likely to get it," he said.

Once that is done, a contractor will want to see that proper checks have been done for wires and pipes underground, Bramson says.

When work begins, you can leave more than the construction to the contractor, he says. Let them lead what he calls "neighbour relations" as work gets started, the noise gets louder and the neighbourhood gets dustier.

"The best person for the neighbours to be mad at is the general contractor because I'm going to leave and not be there ever again," Bramson said. "But the homeowner has to live with that neighbour for the rest of their lives."

ANDREA JANUS

$250/sq. ft.

Additions cost about $250 per square foot, says HGTV's Melissa Davis. You can save by sticking with a single level, but homeowners may regret not doing the second storey at the same time, she says.

Common additions open up a home to the backyard. CONTRIBUTED

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The gift of her

Henrietta Walmark

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum.

An annual ritual I share with my ex-husband amuses our daughter, Sofia. On Mother's Day, he thanks me for the gift of her. And I reciprocate on Father's Day. Best thing we ever did, her father and I say to one another in earnest, to eye rolls from the object of our affection.

Sofia was 10 when her dad and I split up, but the tradition of gratitude continued with the three of us gathering for Mother's Day brunches at a local restaurant, a favourite place where we celebrated family occasions and milestones until her father moved to Indonesia six years ago.

Being Sofia's 'mum' — a British-ism acquired honestly from her very English granny — has meant having an ongoing and affectionate relationship with her dad.

That she thanks us for setting an example of mutual respect is more satisfying than any gift or a decadent meal. Which is just as well, as she is 1,400 km away studying at university and we won't be seeing each other for Mother's Day this year.

Still our mother-daughter connection runs deep. I was invited to her over-the-top 30th birthday bash last month where all the other guests were 20-something. I had a blast. The party pushed me out of my comfort zone, like so many experiences we've shared.

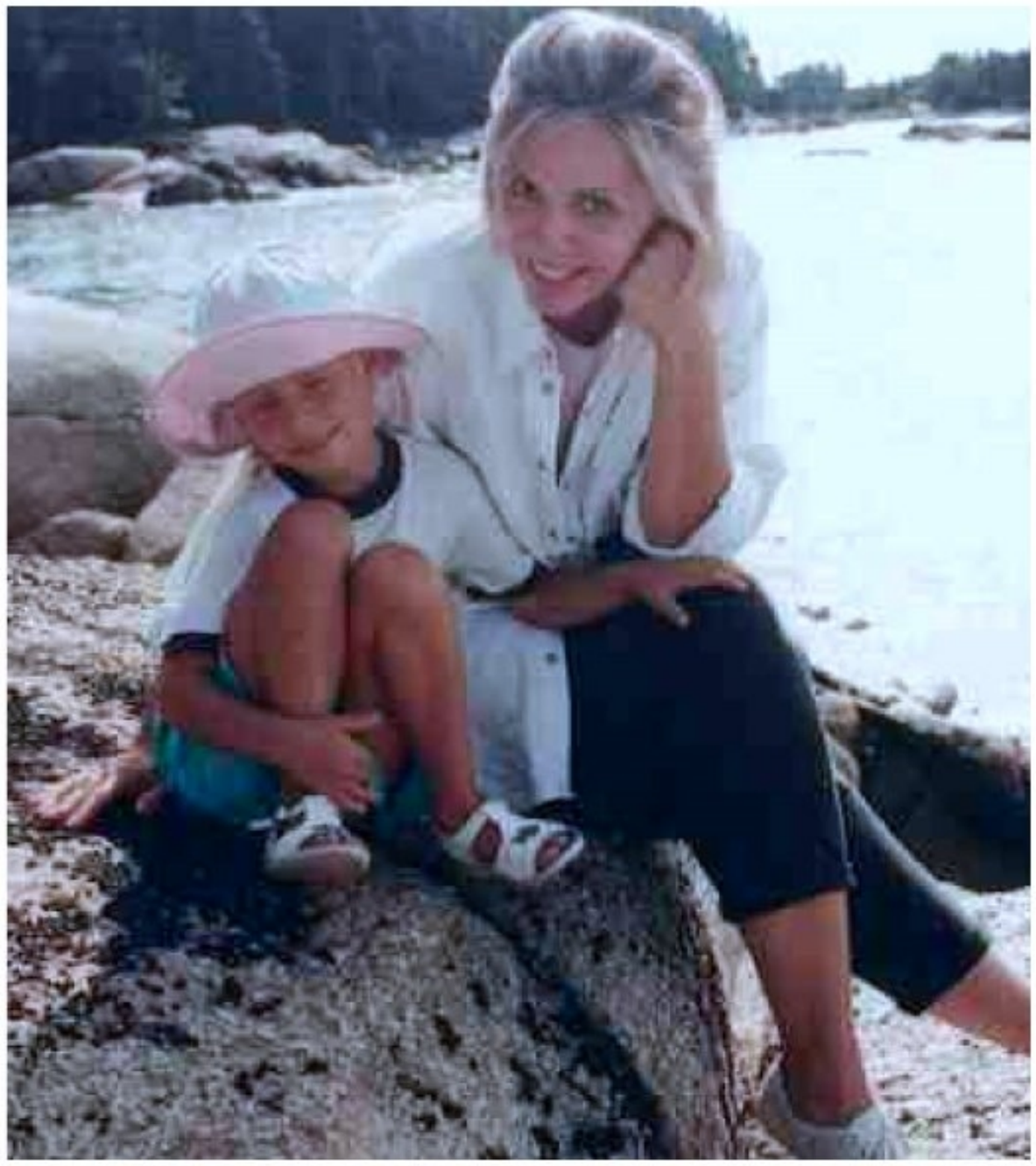
I ventured into new neighbourhoods and venues at all hours when teenage Sofia's plans went awry. She still apologizes to me for those particularly challenging years.

She introduced arty me to the beauty of pure mathematics and physics, which is what you might expect from a kid who has Euler's equation inked on the inside of her wrist.

Thanks to Sofia, I was no bourgeois soccer mom; I was a circus mom. After several years on the sidelines watching as my preteen daughter mastered flying trapeze, I was coaxed into trying it myself and then kept at it for eight years.

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum. I'll mourn a second pregnancy that ended in miscarriage. I'll think of friends who long for a child yet can't conceive, and of those who have lost their mothers. I'll remember the deep affection I shared with my former mother-in-law and her long-time companion. I'll recall last year's sweet and unexpected Mother's Day call from my former son-in-law. And I'll spend the day with my amazing mom.

Oh, and I'll be waiting to hear from Sofia's dad. I'll smile to think of Sofia rolling her eyes even though she won't be here when he thanks me yet again for the gift of her.



Henrietta Walmark with daughter Sofia — then 5, now 30 — in Maine together in 1991. CONTRIBUTED

Something a little unexpected

You've given her the tulips, a big box of chocolates, you've even wrapped up some bath salts, body wash or scented soaps. All lovely sentiments for Mother's Day. This year you're looking to give something more unique and a little unexpected. Astrid Van Den Broek shares some ideas.

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FUJI INSTAX MINI 8 YELLOW, $99.95, INDIGO STORES, INDIGO.CA

50 YEAR CALENDAR PAPERWEIGHT, $16.50, KIKKERLAND.COM

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Something for new moms: a break

GIFTS

What most new moms really want is gratitude, and some time off

Kristen Thompson

I barely remember my first Mother's Day.

I was four weeks into my new gig as a mom, walking around in a fog, exhausted and overwhelmed. Then one little ribbon-wrapped box from my husband turned that all around. Inside was a silver necklace with a circle pendant. On one side was my daughter's name, on the other side her birthdate. Simple, thoughtful, and heart-warming.

There's something unforgettable about the perfect gesture of love and thanks. And that can be hard to narrow down for new moms or moms-to-be, because there hasn't been much time to establish family traditions, and the kids aren't old enough to give their own glue-drenched creations.

There are unlimited gift ideas for new mamas — from hand vacuums to meal delivery services, bottles of wine and pedicure gift certificates. But at the end of the day, what most really want is gratitude, and a break.

I don't mean let them have a 20-minute shower with the door locked. I mean pack those rug rats up and get them out of the house. Before you leave, hand her a book and a coffee with Bailey's (don't skimp on the Bailey's). Give her the day off wiping noses, changing diapers and re-filling sippy cups. And thank her. Again and again, say thank you.

That's what Toronto mom Karen Leslie is hoping for.

"What I want for Mother's Day is not a grand gesture or expensive gift, but some time," she said. "Even an hour not being asked for (something). Just time to be responsible for no one, just my own needs, a bit of time to recharge."

Sudbury mom Emma Dunkley Elliott, who had her first baby in April, agrees.

"As a new mom, I'm pretty exhausted most of the time, so a relaxing day and a little pampering would be fantastic," she said. "Breakfast in bed comes to mind."

"My husband came home last week with a framed photo of me and our daughter. I was so touched I burst into tears. Amid the exhaustion and the emotions, it was such a thoughtful gesture. I think that is a great gift idea."

Jayme Selazek, 32, is due with her first baby in the beginning of June and says the most meaningful way to be celebrated is to make time together as a family.

"Gifts aren't a huge deal, so there shouldn't be a lot of pressure to give them.

But if (someone's) husband wanted to give something, I would suggest something simple (like) a … spa day. Or do something that has been on the to-do list forever. Gifts that are simple, but appreciated."

Sara Ehrhardt, a first time mom to an 11-month-old son, said the best thing spouses can for Mother's Day is listen to cues from their partners.

"For me (the perfect gift is) something to make the family function better. For others, it may be something that makes them feel less like a mom and more like a woman," she said.

Kristen Thompson will be celebrating Mother's Day her two daughters, Isla, 3, and Polly, now seven months. CONTRIBUTED

"Moms can feel lonely those first years (and they) receive very little feedback while mothering babies. So … a day to be recognized feels nice."

New motherhood is different for anyone, but one universal truth is that it can feel exhausting and thankless. We spend so much time doing things for our little ones, it leaves very little time to look after ourselves.

So as much as we love presents, what we really need is a break, we need someone to cater to our needs, and we need to hear the words "You amaze me." And lots and lots of cuddles from the kids. Don't forget the cuddles.

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Gift ideas for new moms

A night at a hotel
Hands down, what most want for Mother's Day is alone time. You could just take the kids out of the house for a couple hours. Or you could seriously step up your game by sending her to a hotel for the night. Many hotels offer packages that include wine and chocolate in the room, and breakfast in the morning. Bonus points for choosing one that offers spa services. Start your search at hotels.ca, which has last minute Mother's Day deals.
• Price: As low as $150
• Available a her favourite hotel, hotels.ca

What I Love About My Mom book
Just because the kids are too little to tell mom how much they appreciate her doesn't mean you can't do it for them. This little book contains fill-in-the-blank lines to describe why mom's the best. Fill it in on behalf of the kids, and it's sure to warm her heart.
• Price: $12
• Available at Indigo stores, indigo.ca.

Personalized pendant necklace
A popular gift item for moms is a charm necklace with engravings of kids' names, initials or finger prints. Kate Spade has a beautiful charm necklace that allows you to engrave an initial on one side, and a small message on the back – like a child's birth dates.
• Price: $64
• Available at The Bay, thebay.com.

L'Occitane Lavender Star Gift Set
Aside from alone time, most moms say they want to feel pampered for Mother's Day. Allow her to feel pampered and relaxed from the comfort of her home with a lavender gift set from L'Occitane, which includes foaming bath, hand cream, soap, a perfumed sachet and a scented candle.

Then draw her a bath, hand her a mimosa and a book, and close the bathroom door.
• Price: $76
• Availableonline or at L'Occitane boutiques around Canada. Visit loccitane.ca.

metro SPORT

"I've always wanted to go against Wade in a playoff series": LeBron James eyes a possible Eastern Conference final vs. his former team

Leicester run 'a fairy tale'

SOCCER

Whitecaps coach, 'keeper praise Premier League champs

Carl Robinson couldn't wait for a reporter to finish his question about Leicester City's improbable run to the English Premier League title before interjecting.

"Unbelievable," the head coach of the Vancouver Whitecaps blurted out. "I don't think it will happen in football again, in any league again.

"It probably still hasn't sunk in for me and I'm on the other side of the world."

Leicester, a team that came close to getting relegated from the Premier League last season, was crowned champion of England for the first time in its 132-year history this week when second-place Tottenham's draw at Chelsea left the leaders with an insurmountable seven-point advantage at the top of the standings.

"There's arguably 10 teams, or maybe even more, that have got better squads than Leicester City — on paper," said Robinson. "What's paper? Paper's there for being ripped up. I think Leicester have shown an example of spirit, togetherness, fight, desire, what it means to play for your football club.

"It's a fairy tale. It really is. It's one that should be remembered and will be remembered for many, many years to come."

Robinson, who played for a number of smaller teams in England before joining Major League Soccer, said Leicester demonstrated that a squad with a fraction of the payroll of the sport's giants can compete and even triumph when everyone is pulling in the same direction.

"The team must always come first," said the Welshman. "If you're willing to roll your sleeves up and work as hard as you possibly can, sometimes that outdoes individual talent."

Robinson's players also watched in awe as a 5000-1 longshot to win the title toppled some of the biggest clubs in the world.

"It's a perfect example: hard work pays off," said Vancouver goalkeeper David Ousted. "Leicester might not have the best players in England, but they have the hardest working team in England."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SUSPENSION

Manneh to sit out Saturday

Whitecaps forward Kekuta Manneh has been suspended one game by Major League Soccer's disciplinary committee.

Manneh stepped on New York City FC midfielder Federico Bravo's shin as he was going for a loose ball in the 68th minute of Saturday's 3-2 loss in New York.

Manneh will miss Saturday's home game against the Portland Timbers.

Leicester City fans mark the team winning the Premier League title. MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Battle of Madrid all set for final

Real Madrid ground out a convincing 1-0 victory over Manchester City on Wednesday to line up a Champions League final against city rival Atletico Madrid.

The second leg of the semifinal was decided by a superb shot by Gareth Bale from a tight angle that deflected off defender Fernando in the 20th minute and was marked down as an own goal. Madrid advanced with a 1-0 aggregate win after a scoreless first-leg draw.

SEMIFINAL Aggregate

Real Madrid	Manchester City
1	0

Real Madrid will be trying to win its 11th Champions League title in Milan on May 28, a rematch of the 2014 final — when it won 4-1 after extra time.

"We will give everything in our souls in another final," Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos said. "We managed to stay united and soak up the pressure to try and pull it off. We've eliminated a huge team in City. It has taken a lot to get to the final, but we deserve it." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Penguins Matt Cullen, left, and Brian Dumoulin sandwich the Capitals' T.J. Oshie on Wednesday night in Pittsburgh.

GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL PLAYOFFS

Pens push Caps to brink of elimination

Patric Hornqvist scored 2:34 into overtime as the Pittsburgh Penguins captured Game 4 against the Washington Capitals 3-2 on Wednesday night, and now lead the second-round series 3-1.

Hornqvist grabbed hold of a blocked point shot, beating Braden Holtby for the game winner.

Trevor Daley and Matt Cullen also scored for the Penguins. Jay Beagle and John Carlson found the back of the net for the Capitals.

Matt Murray stopped 34 of 36 shots, while Holtby surrendered three goals on 33 shots at the other end.

GAME 4 In Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh	Washington
3	2

Pittsburgh won despite playing without top defenceman Kris Letang, who was serving a one-game suspension for his hit on Marcus Johansson in Game 3.

Each of the first four games of the series has been decided by a goal.

An increasingly testy series started with two odd goals, the first from Washington.

Scooping up a puck dumped deep into the corner of the Penguins zone, Beagle flipped an innocent-looking backhand over the left shoulder of Murray. The puck, shot far-side, pinged right out of the goal, almost catching the Consol Energy Center crowd off guard.

The Penguins evened the score at one with a weird one of their own a few minutes later. Shortly after Justin Schultz hit a post for the Penguins, Daley send a shot from the point that was initially blocked by Capitals defenceman Karl Alzner before skipping off the ice and under the pads of Holtby.

Sidney Crosby, charging hard to the net, provided the screen, also landing an assist on the play. It was the first point of the series for the Penguins captain.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lowry finds humour in his sad shooting stroke

RAPTORS
GAME 2 PREVIEW

All-star point guard posting a paltry 30.6 FG%

A mug shot of Kyle Lowry on a milk carton was making the rounds on social media on Wednesday.

Posted by Twitter account Fake SportsCenter, the milk carton had Lowry's smiling face under the headline: "Missing. Have you seen me? Last seen in the regular-season."

Lowry was the first to admit Wednesday that the version of himself that earned NBA all-star honours has gone AWOL. That's why he stayed on the Air Canada Centre court, headphones in, black hoodie pulled up over his head, until 1:15 a.m. after Tuesday night's overtime loss to Miami in Game 1 of their second-round playoff series.

"Just being a kid again, trying to have some fun," Lowry said of his early morning shooting session. "It was being out there and having time to reflect on things and think about the game that I grew up as a kid ... and the game I love. There were countless nights I've done that back in North Philly."

Lowry was in good spirits after Wednesday's practice, open and honest with the couple of dozen reporters in attendance. He half-heartedly joked about an unflattering stat that a Raptors media relations person had shown him: his 30.6 shooting field goal percentage is the worst in a single post-season in 50 years.

"I'll take that award, I mean it's an award ... take some type of good with it," he laughed — but followed up with a heavy sigh. "It's life. It's a basketball game, I know I can shoot better than 31 per cent."

The scrappy, hard-working guard has been instrumental in the Raptors' rise over the last three seasons. His shooting was off during the opening-round series against Indiana, but he made up for it with solid ball movement and defence. Lowry said the fact he's in a slump now, in the biggest stretch of his career, is what's most frustrating.

"It's crazy. It's mind-boggling to me. 'Dude how are you not making these shots?' For me, I go into the games like I'm about to go and we are going to win this game. Then I miss a shot and it's 'OK.' Then I miss another shot and that's when it's like 'Alright, I've got to try and do something different.'"

The Raptors had chances to win Game 1 despite Lowry's poor performance, but Toronto's two-time all-star said they can't win the series if he doesn't turn it around.

He'll get his next shot on Thursday, when the Raptors host the Heat in Game 2. The series then moves to Miami for Game 3 on Saturday and Game 4 on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kyle Lowry sank just three of his 13 shots from the field in the Raptors' 102-96 overtime loss to the Heat on Tuesday night. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **"I got texts from my teammates and I've talked to them. They have my back. I just have to go out and play.**
> Kyle Lowry

NBA PLAYOFFS

Cavs stick 3-point landing

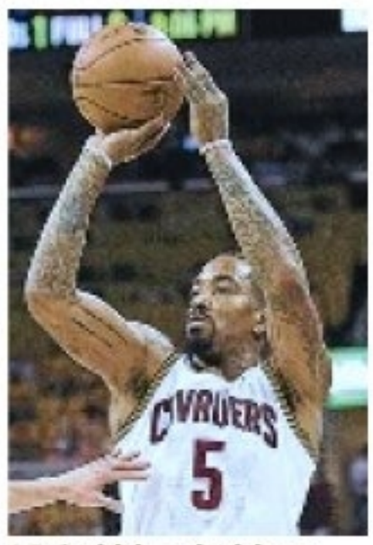
J.R. Smith made seven three-pointers and the Cleveland Cavaliers drained an NBA-record 25 threes in a 123-98 runaway win over the Atlanta Hawks on Wednesday night in Game 2 of their second-round series.

The Cavs made 18 three-pointers in the first half and added seven more after halftime to embarrass the Hawks, who have lost 10 straight post-season games to Cleveland.

Cleveland's 25 threes are the most in any game — regular or post-season.

LeBron James made four threes and scored 27 points for the defending Eastern Conference champions, who put on a display of outside marksmanship unlike any in league history. The Cavs hardly missed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



J.R. Smith knocked down seven three pointers on Wednesday. NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

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IN BRIEF

Cranbrook forward Hunt wins top WHL honours

Moose Jaw Warriors winger Dryden Hunt was named the Western Hockey League's player of the year on Wednesday.

Hunt, who led the WHL with 58 goals and 58 assists in 72 regular-season games, accepted the Four Broncos Memorial Trophy at the WHL awards ceremony in front of former NHLers Joe Sakic, Bobby Clarke and Lanny McDonald.

"I'm honoured to have those guys here," said the 20-year-old from Cranbrook. "I think it's great for us young guys to see those guys come in and I think they enjoyed this experience as much as we did. It's great to see those guys and to win this award in front of them ... it's a pretty special way to end off my WHL career."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Martin sends Jays to victory

Russell Martin drove in Ezequiel Carrera with the winning run in the ninth inning as the Toronto Blue Jays defeated the Texas Rangers 4-3 on Wednesday night at Rogers Centre.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cubs collect another win at expense of rival Pirates'

The Chicago Cubs are threatening to run away with the NL Central.

Ben Zobrist hit a three-run home run, Anthony Rizzo also connected and Jon Lester worked out of a pair of jams to lead the Cubs over the second-place Pittsburgh Pirates 6-2 Wednesday for a three-game sweep.

With its seventh win in eight games, Chicago improved to a major league-best 20-6.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RECIPE Lemon Thyme Chicken Burger

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Lemon and thyme are such an appealing spring flavour combo that we come back to it over and over. It's an unexpected addition to a burger and don't skip the goat cheese which takes it over the top.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
- 1 lb ground chicken
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 1 egg, whisked
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 onion, finely minced
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp dijon mustard
- salt and pepper
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 wholewheat rolls
- toppings like lettuce, tomatoes, goat cheese

Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together the meat, thyme, zest, juice, egg, breadcrumbs, onions mustard and salt and pepper. Using your hands, form the mixture into 4 x ¾ inch-thick patties.

2. Heat up your pan or barbecue. Add a drop of vegetable oil to the pan if you're cooking them on the stove. Cook the patties over medium/high heat for about 5 minutes on each side. You want the internal temperature to be between 165 and 170.

3. Top your buns with whatever your family likes but we highly recommend goat cheese.

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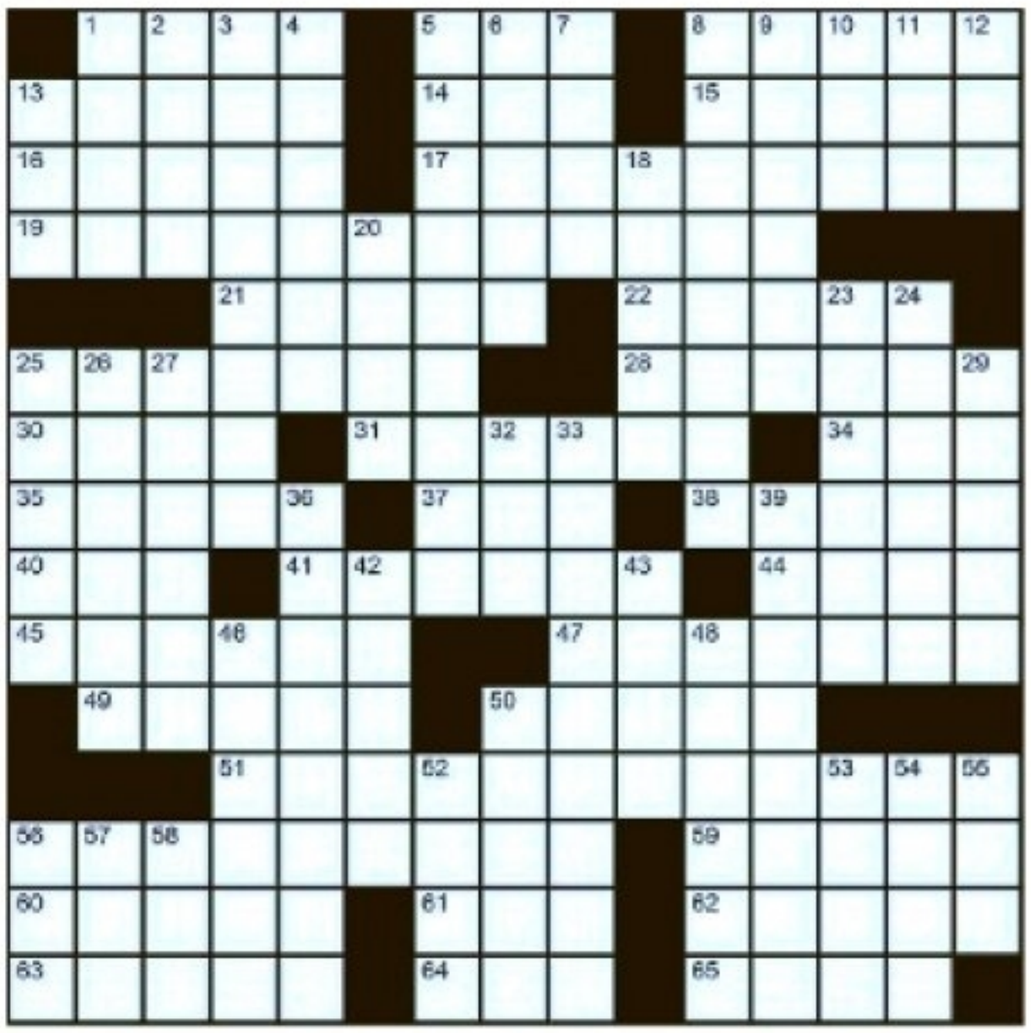
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Cutting comment
5. "Roxanne" (1987) star ...his initials-sharers
8. Relating to Atomic Number 76
13. Jazz/funk saxophonist Mr. Parker
14. Head-to-_
15. "Wheel of Fortune" letters turner
16. Drinking prop
17. Montreal borough
19. Hit movie of 1984 directed by Canadian director Ivan Reitman
21. Prison takeover, for example
22. Sun-dried brick
25. Newfoundland rum
28. Host/comedian Mr. O'Brien's
30. Murmurs
31. Fort _. _ (Northeastern BC city)
34. Dangerous fly, when doubled
35. Put down
37. "Wowy!"
38. Cyber correspondence
40. Broadcaster Mr. King, for short
41. Make a new home, as a bird
44. Gymnast Ms. Korbut
45. Very small antelope which makes a distinct sound when alarmed
47. Cone-shaped Medieval headdresses
49. "_ _ say more?"
50. Prefix to 'comedy' (Comedic drama)
51. Cheater's problem: 2 wds.
56. Oval track vehicle: 2 wds.
59. Sample that sample: 2 wds.
60. Jean _ (Quebec pharmacy chain)
61. _ de coeur (Heartfelt protest)
62. Some seals
63. Short acting performances
64. Suffix with 'Expert'
65. Peter Pan character

DOWN
1. Aptly-named hot springs town in England
2. Prefix to 'bat' (Circus performer)
3. Appraise anew
4. Tuxedo-wearer's accessory
5. 'Crossroads of Friendship' town in southern Saskatchewan
6. Computer's pointer/clicker
7. Cobblestone
8. Cooked too much
9. _ and Delilah
10. Alphabetic trio
11. Lodging for road trippers
12. Feline
13. Food additive, commonly
18. Stretch to grasp
20. Bird 'bills' in Boucherville
23. Celebrity chef Mario of ABC's "The Chew"
24. Navy rank
25. Steamily sting
26. Nirvana rocker Kurt
27. Mr. _ ("Fantasy Island" character)
29. Actress Ms. Ward's
32. Morning beverage, informally
33. 1984 Steve Perry song that goes "You should've been gone / Knowing how I made you feel.": 2 wds.
36. Southern hemisphere constellation
39. Personalized embroidery, as on a bathrobe
42. "Stand By Me" by Ben _. _
43. Ms. Hatcher
46. Joyce of "Three's Company"
48. Last regular play baseball innings
50. Department store chain
52. Nero's 701
53. Literature governess Jane
54. "Egad!"
55. Ands: French
56. Lettered colas
57. Hunky-dory
58. _ bono? = For whose benefit? ...in Latin

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Business, commerce and all financial dealings are blessed today — no question. Do the deal. In addition, purchases of beautiful things for yourself and loved ones will please you. Ka-ching!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You love beautiful things, good food and the outdoors, especially lovely gardens. Today is the perfect day to enjoy these things. It's also a lovely day for romance.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Solitude in beautiful surroundings will delight you today. Pamper yourself in any way that you can.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will enjoy hanging out with creative, charming people today. You feel social and warmhearted toward others.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will make a great impression on bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs today. In fact, a flirtation or romance with your boss or someone in a position of authority might blossom.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Give yourself a chance to see beautiful places today. Travel for pleasure will be a treat, because you will truly appreciate the artistic creations of others.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Because you can benefit from the wealth and resources of others today, this is a good time to ask for a loan or a mortgage. In all your dealings with others, people will be generous to you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Relations with partners and close friends are warm and friendly today. This is a great day for a date or schmoozing with the general public.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Co-workers are supportive today. You might get a raise or praise! You will enjoy making your workplace more attractive in some way. (Let others help you if they offer.)

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Love at first sight is encouraged by the stars today. Whatever you do will be pleasant, fun-loving and enjoyable, because this is a lighthearted, pleasant day.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a good day to check out real estate deals or to buy something beautiful for your home. Invite the gang over for good food and drink, because today also favors family get-togethers.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You can make money with your words today, which is good news for writers, actors, teachers and people in sales.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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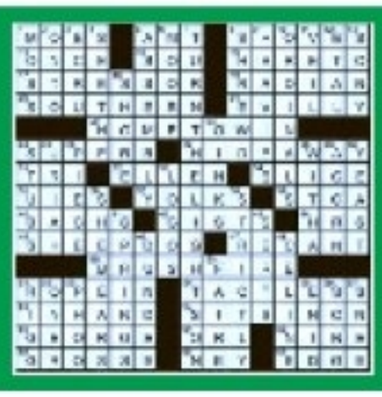

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